Amendments to the Specification:

*Please amend the paragraph on page 2, lines 12-22 as follows:

The physical manifestation of watermarked information most commonly takes the form of altered signal values, such as slightly changed pixel values, picture luminance, picture colors, DCT ("Discrete Cosine Transform") coefficients, instantaneous audio amplitudes, etc. However, a watermark can also be manifested in other ways, such as changes in the surface microtopology of a medium, localized chemical changes (e.g. in photographic emulsions), localized variations in optical density, localized changes in luminescence, etc. The surface texture of an object may be altered to create a watermark pattern. This may be accomplished by manufacturing an object in a manner that creates a textured surface or by applying material to the surface (e.g., an invisible film or ink) in a subsequent process. Watermarks can also be optically implemented in holograms or embedded in conventional paper watermarks.

*Please amend the paragraph on page 11, lines 9-16 as follows:

In a related implementation we embed a so-called RFID ("Radio Frequency Identification") tag or chip in a driver license and/or license plate. The RFID is detected and used for cross-correlation or linking as discussed above. The RFID can be embedded during driver license and/or plate manufacture. Indeed, many plate-manufacturing processes are trending toward plastic materials, which make RFID insertion even more feasible. The RFID identifier can be associated with other documents or through a database record. We note that an RFID chip may not always be suitable for other vehicle-related documents due to size, manufacture and cost constraints.

*Please amend the paragraph on page 11, lines 17-29 as follows:

A digital watermark identifier can also be used in accident/crime reporting or for tollbooth payment. A bystander witnesses an accident. The bystander whips out her camera-equipped cell phone, captures an image of a watermarked license plate and sends the image (or a decoded digital watermark identifier) to a 911 center. The 911 center receives the image, decodes the steganographically embedded identifier and then responds to the accident or crime scene. A GPS ("Global Positioning System") device associated with the cell phone can be used to confirm an accident location. While this procedure can be manually performed through a recitation of the license plate number, the reporting accuracy skyrockets by relying on the machine-readable information. Similarly, tollbooths or automated speeding ticket cameras can capture images of cars as they speed by, decode a watermark identifier from an image of a digitally watermarked license plate, access the corresponding account or record with the identifier, and respond accordingly (e.g., debit an account associated with the car if a tollbooth or issue a speeding ticket to a corresponding driver if a ticketing camera).

*Please amend the paragraph on page 17, lines 4-9 as follows:

The implementation of some of the functionality described above (including watermark or steganographic encoding and decoding) can be implemented by suitable software, stored in memory for execution on an associated processor or processing circuitry. In other implementations, the functionality can be achieved by dedicated hardware, or by a combination of hardware and software. Reprogrammable logic, including FPGAs ("Field-programmable Gate Array"), can advantageously be employed in certain implementations.